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ABSTRACT

In a study of the similarities between childrens' competitive team sports and the typical corporate or business environment, two research questions were posed: (1) Does the structural organization of childrens' soccer and ice hockey organizations resemble that of American corporations?; and (2) Are the values of childrens' competitive sports similar to corporate values? Questionnaires were distributed to 222 Connecticut and New York fathers with 11 or 12 year old sons in soccer and ice hockey teams. Through observations and interviews, it was found that the structural organization of the childrens' ice hockey and soccer programs clearly resembled that of corporations. An organizational chart illustrated the hierarchies and divisions in a youth soccer program, and it was also found that the values stressed in competitive sports are similar to corporate values. The fathers selected teamwork as the most important sports attribute that would contribute to success in business. The importance of learning to be part of a team was a constant theme in the fathers' responses. Although some fathers expressed misgivings about the amount of politics in the team selection process and the inconveniences of complying with practice and travel schedules, most fathers had positive attitudes toward competitive youth sports. Those who have participated in competitive sports have an advantage over others who are not socialized in these values, skills, and attitudes. (FG)

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ARE CHILDREN'S COMPETITIVE TEAM SPORTS SOCIALIZING AGENTS FOR CORPORATE AMERICA?

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Kick the can, stickball, and mumbly peg - to the children of today are mysterious games of the past, relics of an age of informal play. In the past, neighborhood children in their free time gathered in the street or in someone's yard or in a vacant lot to play such games as baseball or football. The games were spontaneous, informal and for fun. Equipment was often whatever was available and suitable at the time. Bases might be made of discarded cardboard, rocks or might be a designated tree. There were no uniforms or special shoes. Scores were etched in one's memory. Winners were jubliant over scoring more runs or points. There were no standings. Teams changed and each day's game was a new event. Games were played for fun.

Since World War II children's play has been transformed from informal games to highly organized sporting events. Adults now organize and direct most sports program for children from Little League baseball to youth soccer. Today these programs mirror professional teams. Each team has a coach, a manager, uniforms and an official schedule. Scoreboards, official league standings, tournaments now determine success. Trophies and newspaper coverage now signify winners. The play ethic associated with childrens' games of playing to have fun, to relax, to let off steam has shifted to teaching skills, to developing character, to developing scholarship winners and professionals.

Participation in adult organized sports programs such as Little League baseball, Pee Wee ice hockey, or Pop Warner football are more and more becoming a part of a child's life in the United States. Today, it is estimated

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that nearly 30 million youth, ages 6 through 21, participate in organized out-of-school sports and that at least fifty percent of the children growing up today will at some time be participants. If the child is a boy or lives in a small town or suburb, the chances are even higher that the child will participate (Conrad, 1981:87-88).

This pattern of children participating in adult structured and organized sports activities reflects the changes that are taking place in American society in general and specifically in child-rearing in terms of changing attitudes toward parental involvement in the structuring of their children's lives. Today, there is an emphasis on the idea that parents should help their children to develop to their fullest whether it be socially, academically, physically or emotionally. There are now courses given in many communities on "effective parenting." Many parents believe that part of being an effective parent is to organize their children's free time and to make sure that their children participate in after school activities. Having their children participate in organized sports is seen as one effective way of helping their children to develop physical, social and emotional skills. Sports are being seen as an essential part of a child's socialization.

Sports programs also serve another function. They provide after school supervision of children. With more mothers and fathers both working, there is a concern with making sure junior is supervised. Sports programs are seen as providing meaningful supervision in that they are developing the total child. This is seen by many parents as superior to having a babysitter who is primarily concerned just with the child's physical well-being.

These changes in perspective on childrearing are products of a changing American economic structure. Today, most Americans work for corporations and few are self-employed. In 1979 only 9% of males and 5% of females were

self-employed in non-agricultural jobs. (Statistical Abstract of U.S. 1980:466). The working lives of most adults are company regimented and organized. The independent entrepreneur is the exception in today's work force. Many adults, today, complain of being overly scheduled and that their lives are overly organized. Yet, they see these complaints as being universal and necessary in a productive life.

The comparison between children's sports of today and American society has been pointed out by Berryman. He states:

> ... the degree to which children's sports became organized mirrored an often proclaimed American characteristic of being overly regimented, businesslike and competitive. (1975:131).

The professionalism of children's sports probably began sometime after the 1950s and continues today. According to Nixon (1976:56) professional sports organizations as large-scale bureaucratic structures probably began in the 1950s and were indicative of changes in the U.S. economic system.

Page, for example, believes that the bureaucratization of professional sport has penetrated into youth sports and that the coach's authority now penetrates beyond the sport's realm.

> This large-scale bureaucratization of sport, it should be stressed, is by no means confined to its professional version: rules and routine, the ascendency of work over play, and the use of coach's authority within and beyond the athletic realm has penetrated deeply into collegiate and high school sports and even into the adult-controlled, highly organized "little leagues" in baseball and football. (1973:33).

Children's sports resemble more and more training grounds for the adult world and for business than games for fun. Beisser, for example, sees sports as a useful bridge between child play and adult work.

> Work has already lost many of its traditional characteristics and so has play. Play has become increasingly transformed into organized sports, and sports, in turn, increasingly resemble work in the arduous practice and preparation they require, in the intense involvement of coaches and athletes in the spirit of work, and in their actual economic productivity. (1973:94-95)

Sports may serve to socialize children in values, attitudes and behavior suited to corporate jobs. In fact, several organizational studies on women in corporations have cited women's lack of experience with team sports as one reason why they have not been more successful in the corporate world. Harragan in her discussion of corporate gamesmanship for women emphasizes the similarities between the corporate group and the competitive sport team. She explains why men's participation in team sports socializes them for the corporate world.

> The traditional boy's games are far from pointless childish pursuits. They are training grounds for life, preparation for adult imperatives of working with others, practical education for the discipline of business. The most popular games of baseball, football, and basketball are all team sports, and a structured, organized team is a well-defined social unit. Each individual member occupies a special niche on the team; the functions of each position are prescribed, as is the territory or region of play for that function; each player knows exactly what his duties are and how they dovetail into operations of the rest of the team; each player knows that he must practice his personal skills so that his performance is a credit to the team and a contribution to its success; and each player knows that he has to perform smoothly and cooperatively with the others if he wants to retain his place on the team. If there's a conflict between individual glory and the greater glory of the team, then personal virtuosity must be sacrificied. If not, the star may find himself ostracized by teammates or eliminated by the coach. The exigencies of team play mandate a higher god than the individual--the good of the team, the success of the common effort. (1977:50)

Various sociologists such as Edwards, Page and Schafer have commented on the role of sports as a socializing agent for American society.

> ... the social world of sport, although clearly distinguishable, is an inseparable part of the larger society; its cultural characteristics reflect the more inclusive culture and in turn, help to shape society's standards and style of life. (Page, 1973:35)

However, traditional American values as expressed in the Protestant Ethic may have changed to what Whyte in the 1950s called the "social ethic." The social ethic according to Whyte could also be called an organization or bureaucratic ethic. The social ethic has three main propositions: "a belief

in the group as the source of creativity; a belief in "belongingness" as the ultimate need of the individual; and a belief in the application of science to achieve the belongingness." (1957:7)

Scott and Hart in 1979 state that a new "organizational imperative" has replaced the Protestant Ethic of the past.

> The organizational imperative, while originally a subset within the context of the overarching social value system, has now become the dominant force in the homogenization of organizational America, displacing the more individualistic values of the past. (52)

Margolis in her study of corporate managers in one community also emphasizes how corporate values are affecting the whole community and not just those employed by the corporation. "Giant corporations appear to be setting the style and dictating the terms of life for those they do not employ almost as much as they do for those in their pay." (1979:267)

Today American cultural values have become more and more oriented to a corporate economy and the values of children's organized team sports may reflect these changes. Competitive team sports may have become socializing agents for corporate America.

This research was designed to explore the question: Are children's competitive team sports socializing agents for corporate America?

Two basic issues were explored:

1. Does the structural ogranization of children's competitive sports programs resemble the structural organization of American corporations?
2. Are the values of children's competitive sports programs similar to corporate values?

Method:

Data was based on examining the structure and organization of children's soccer and ice hockey organizations in the Connecticut and New York metro-

politan area. Information is based on observations as well as interviews with parents and coaches of children both at the intramural and travel league divisions.

Questionnaires were also distributed to 222 Connecticut and New York metropolitan area fathers' with sons on soccer and ice hockey travel teams. The reason why questionnaires were distributed to fathers' of elite or travel team players was that it was felt that if the values of competitive team sports are similar to corporate values that they would be most salient at the highest levels of competition. The socialization process at the travel team level would be more intense than at the house league or recreational league level.

The hockey sample consisted of fathers who had sons competing in the Pee Wee Level Divsion III Connecticut State Tournament. The Pee Wee division is comprised of boys ages 11 through 12 years. All fathers of participants were asked to fill out questionnaires. No one refused to participate. However, some boys' fathers were deceased, divorced or unable to attend the tournament and therefore, responses were collected from 107 fathers. These fathers were from various parts of Connecticut since ten teams finishing the season at this level were invited to the tournament. The data was gathered in March, 1981.

The soccer sample consisted of fathers who had sons competing in a local Connecticut soccer tournament. Teams were drawn from communities in New York and Connecticut which are part of the New York metropolitan area. The teams were comprised of boys ages 11 through 12 years. As with the hockey sample, all fathers of participants were asked to fill out the questionnaires. 115 fathers completed questionnaires. The data was gathered in June, 1981.

The background characteristics of fathers in the soccer and hockey samples were as follows:

TABLE 1

Fathers' Educational Levels

Education Level	Soccer Sample	Hockey Sample	Combined
Graduate Degree	(35) 31%	(27) 25%	(62) 28%
College Degree	(46) 40%	(44) 41%	(90) 41%
Some College	(23) 20%	(22) 21%	(45) 20%
High School or less	(10) 9%	(14) 13%	(24) 11%
Totals	(114) 100%	(107) 100%	(221) 100%

TABLE 2

Fathers' Occupational Levels

Occupational Level	Soccer Sample	Hockey Sample	Combined
1. Higher Executives, Major Professionals and Owners of Large concerns.	(29) 28%	(29) 28%	(58) 28%
2. Business Mangers, Lesser Professionas and Owners of Medium Concerns.	(49) 47%	(25) 24%	(74) 35%
3. Administrative Personnel, Minor Professions and owners of Medium Concerns.	(14) 13%	(27) 26%	(41) 20%
4. Clerical & Sales Workers, Technicians and Owners of Little Businesses.	(1) 1%	(10) 10%	(10) 5%
5. Skilled Manual Workers	(12) 11%	(12) 12%	(24) 11%
6. Machine Operators and Semi-Skilled Employees	(0) 0%	(1) 1%	(1) 1%
7. Unskilled Workers	(0) 0%	(0) 0%	(0) 0%
Totals	(105) 100%	(104) 100%	(209) 100%

The sample consists mainly of middle class fathers' with white collar jobs. This is probably the result of two factors: one the nature of the socio-economic backgrounds of people living in the New York metropolitan area and in Connecticut and two, the high cost of participating on a travel team. Similar research should be conducted with a more working class population.

Findings:

The structural organization of children's competitive soccer and hockey sports programs resemble the structural organization of American corporations. Even on the community level, many sports organizations clearly resemble bureaucratic or corporate structures. The diagram that follows is the adult organizational structure for the youth soccer program in Wilton, Connecticut, a suburban community with a population around 15,000. Although the organizational structure is more highly developed than in some other communities, it is fairly typical of organizational patterns. With a few label changes, the chart of the soccer hierarchical structure could easily be that of many corporations.

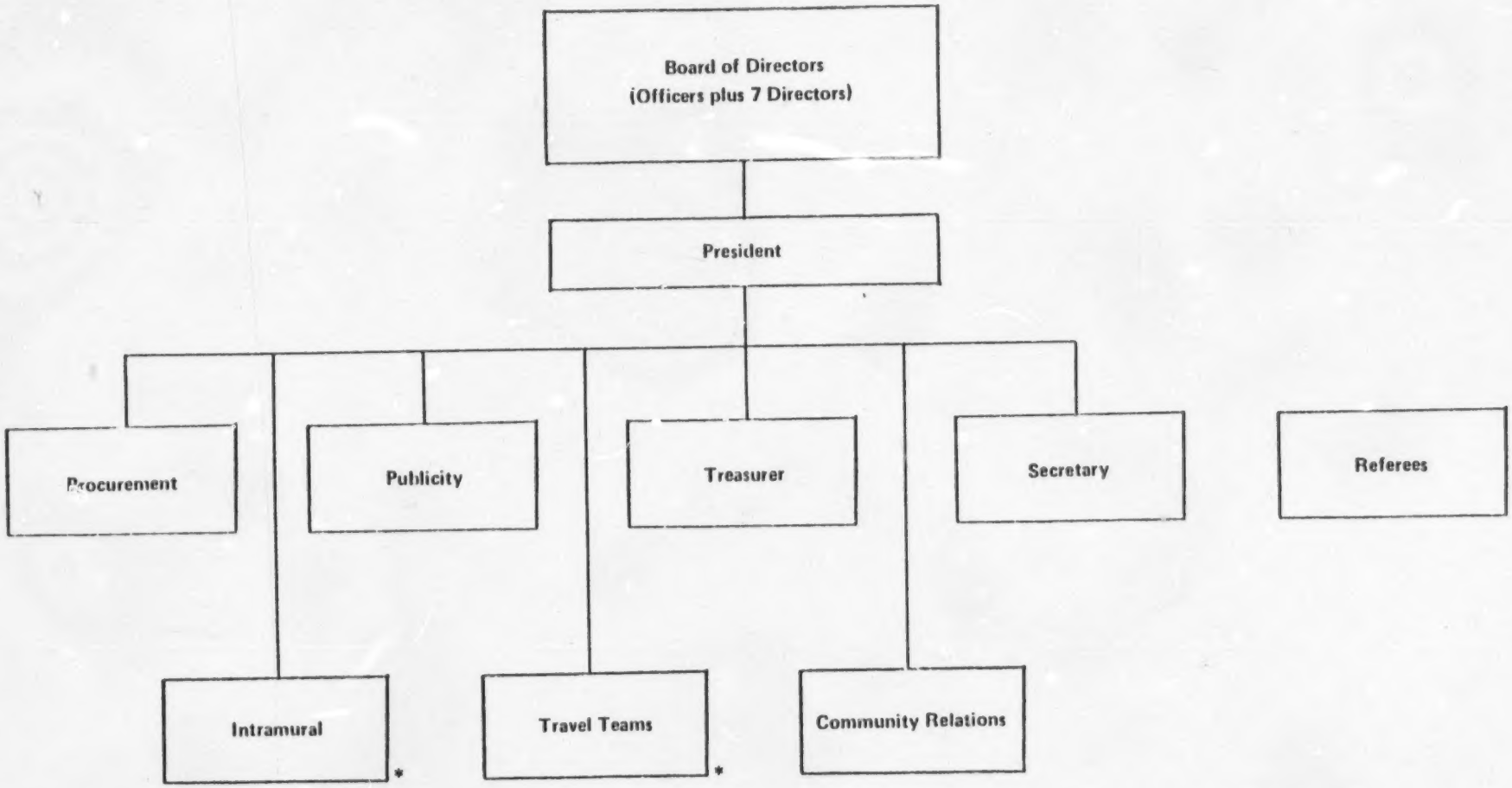
The organizational chart indicates how bureaucratically and formally organized children's team sports have become. No aspect of the organization from public relations in the community to the actual composition of teams is left to chance. There is a hierarchy of responsibility.

The chart is illustrative of Merton's definition of a bureaucracy as "a formal, rationally organized social structure (with) clearly defined patterns of activity in which, ideally, every series of actions is functionally related to the purposes of the organization." (1968:249).

At the bottom of the hierarchy are the coaches of the actual teams. Even within the team divisions there is a hierarchy defined by age and skill

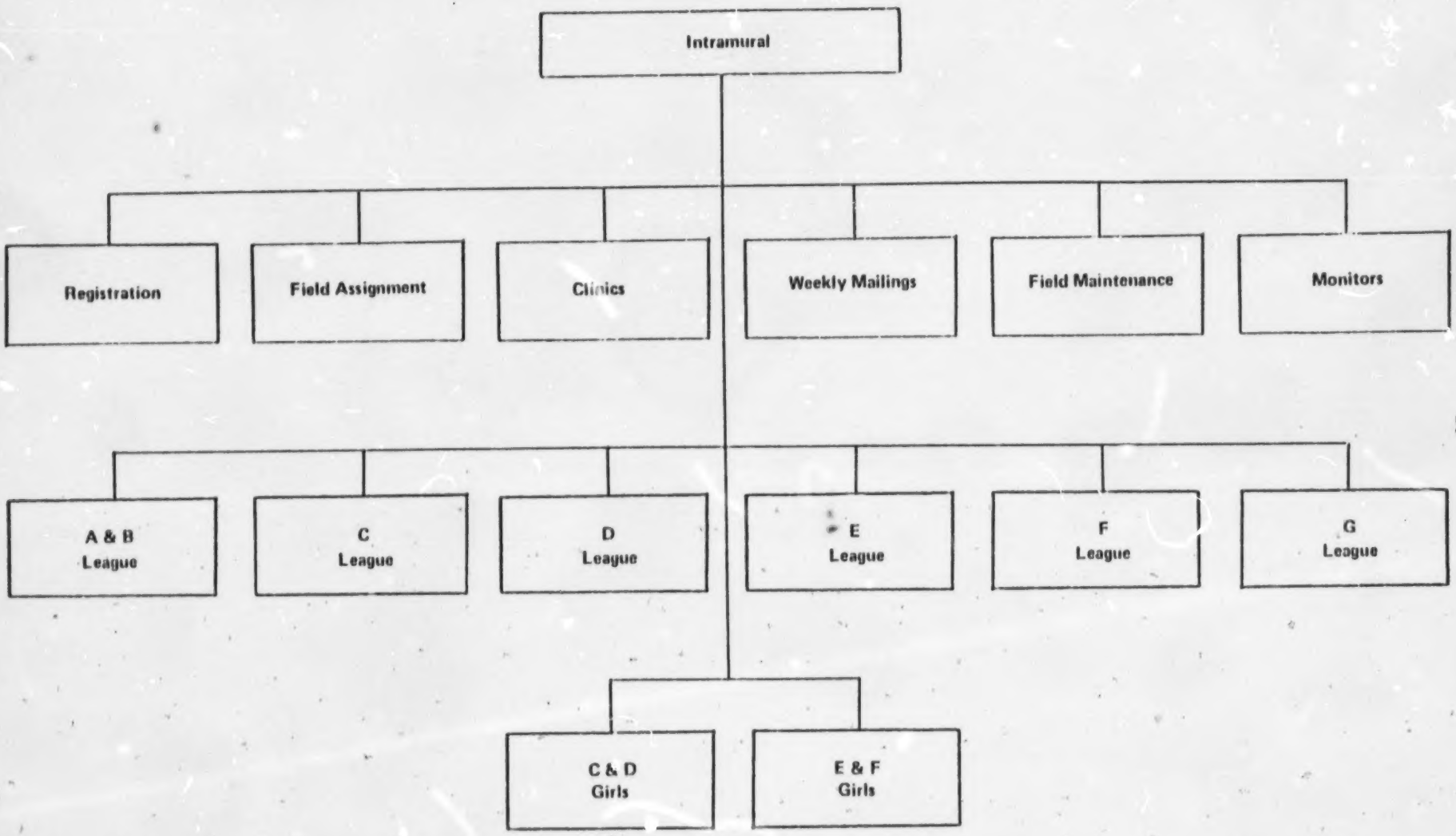
TABLE 3

Soccer Association Hierarchy



*See next two pages for hierarchical structure for teams.

TABLE 3 (Continued)



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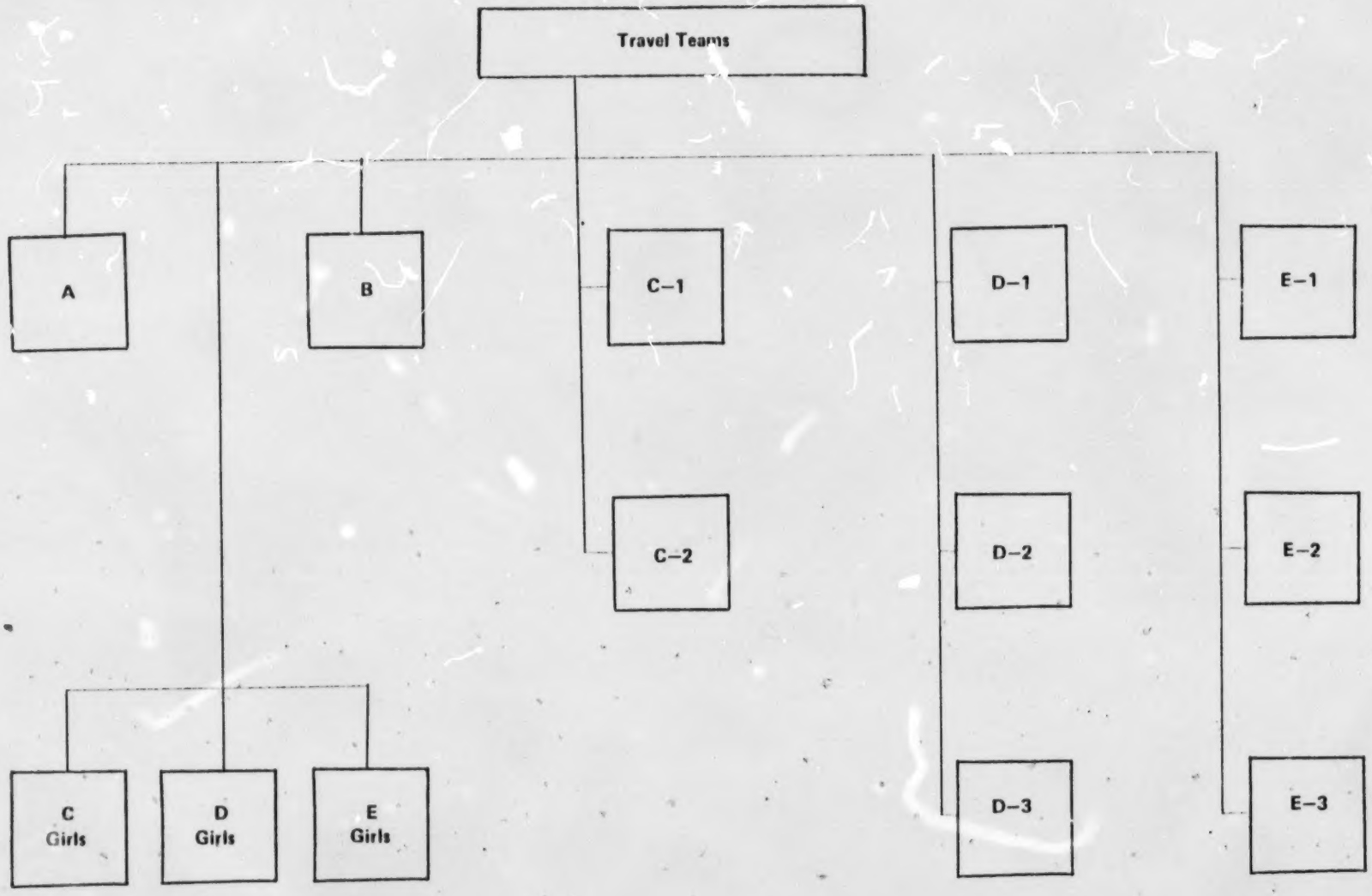

differences. Within each age division are travel teams and house league or intramural teams. For example, at the D division level the 11 and 12 year old division, there is a hierarchy of teams. The intramural teams are at the bottom level, then D3 travel, then D2 travel and the most elite travel team D1. Every year each boy is also assigned by his coach a skill assessment level from 1 to 5. The higher the number the more skilled the player. In other words, players are constantly evaluated for performance. However, travel team players once they make the team are rarely dropped by the coach. In a way making a travel team is similar to gaining a promotion in a corporation. Prestige in the league and in the community at large accompanies travel team attainment. Other rewards are special travel team uniforms, travel to other communities, and increased newspaper coverage and a chance for winning state tournaments and trophies. The youth become classified as a sports elite similar to corporate executives.

The values stressed in children's competitive sports are also similar to corporate values. One of the major values of the "social ethic" according to Whyte is a belief in the group as a source of creativity. Team sports epitomize group effort over individual effort. A team player whether within a corporation or in a youth team sport is inculcated with the belief that the team effort is something greater and better than the sum of the individual player's effort.

Fathers' of soccer travel team players were asked to check off the three attributes that sports develop that they thought would be most important for a youth to develop to be successful in business. The most important attribute according to these fathers was teamwork. 67% of the fathers selected teamwork from the list of ten items. The top four were teamwork, self-discipline, leadership and competition. (See Table 4)

TABLE 4

What Soccer Fathers' Consider as the Most Important Attribute Sports Develop for Business

Teamwork	(77)	67%
Self-Discipline	(71)	62%
Leadership	(65)	57%
Competitiveness	(58)	50%
Honesty	(20)	17%
Respect for Authority	(15)	13%
Physical Fitness	(11)	10%
Sportsmanship	(11)	10%
Political Awareness	(8)	7%
Masculinity	(0)	0%
Other	(1)	1%

Hockey fathers were asked to list the three attributes that sports develop that they considered the most important. The words for business were not included. Teamwork was listed by 71% of the fathers'. (See Table 5).

TABLE 5

What Hockey Fathers Consider as the Most Important Attributes Sports Develop

Teamwork	(76)	71%
Self-discipline	(65)	61%
Sportsmanship	(50)	47%
Competitiveness	(48)	45%
Leadership	(26)	24%
Physical Fitness	(26)	24%
Respect for Authority	(11)	10%
Honesty	(7)	7%
Political Awareness	(2)	2%
Masculinity	(0)	0%
Other	(3)	3%

The importance of learning to be a part of a team was a constant theme of both soccer and hockey fathers. Fathers seemed to want to inculcate in their sons the idea that the product of a team's effort is greater than the sum of the individual participants and that team cooperation is more important than any individual performance. Comments such as the following were common: "The concept of one team pulling together applies in both (business and

sports) situations." "He learns the benefits of working with and depending on others." "...learning how to work together as a team and the recognition of what can be accomplished through group effort." "He learns to play as part of an organized group--knows doing his job helps the team to win." "...an early realization of a level of interdependency, plus a satisfaction from self-discipline."

Teamwork was a central theme of the fathers. No one spoke of making a star, but rather that the group effort was more important. This value is congruent with Whyte's notions about the "social ethic." Whyte stated: "The man of the future, as junior executives see him, is not the individualist, but the man who works through others for others." (1957:21)

Whyte also stresses the importance of self-discipline in the "new" corporate ethic.

> As organization men see it, through an extension of the group spirit, through educating people to sublimate their egos, organizations can rid themselves of their tyrants and create a harmonious atmosphere in which the group will bring out the best in everyone. (1957:54).

The top two values that the majority of fathers considered important for their sons to learn from playing on a team (teamwork and self-discipline) are the same two that Maccoby describes as central to the new corporate top executive.

> The new corporate top executive... is a team player whose center is the corporation. ...Thus he thinks in terms of what is good for the company, hardly separating that from what is good for himself... He has succeeded in submerging his ego and gaining strength from his exercise in self-control." (1977:41)

The new leader of corporate America according to Maccoby is not the jungle-figher, industrialist of the past who was driven to build and preside over empires but rather the man who is a good team organizer. (1977, p. 24)

Coaches, too, want dedicated team players not individualistic stars. Players that don't conform and don't submit to practice schedules, team assignments and who don't get along with team members are dispensible. No one is indispensible. If the youth isn't totally dedicated to the team effort, he can be replaced.

As the coach emphasizes the need for the child to totally commit himself to the team and to be loyal and dedicated to the team, so does the corporation. As Whyte states: "Social ethic (corporate ethic) rationalizes the organization's demands for fealty and gives those who offer it wholeheartedly a sense of dedication in doing so--." (1957:6)

As corporations demand total commitment to the organization on the part of the worker, travel team coaches constantly stress the importance of the child's total commitment to the team. Practices and games take precedence over family dinner hours, family activities and other social events. As with the corporate man, the company comes first and dominates his life, the team comes to dominate the child's. As wives and children learn that the husband often has to work late or travel on business trips and misses family and school occasions and they have to mold their schedule around the husband, the family also molds their schedule around the travel team player. Many parents of travel team players for both hockey and soccer reported that the child's participation interferred with dinner, vacations, family activities and even with school.

84% of soccer fathers' said soccer interferred with dinner hours. 46% said it interferred with family vacations, 77% said is disrupted family activities and 16% even said it interferred with school.

Hockey fathers' reported similar accounts. 80% said hockey interferred with dinner hours, 44% with family vacations, 72% with family activities and

28% with school.

One may wonder why parents let their children's sports interfere with family activities. But the reasons are similar to why company men let the corporation interfere with their family life. Being on a travel team is prestige conferring for the child and his family. As social prestige for the father revolves around his work, for the child social prestige at school and in the community often is a product of his sports participation (Gordon, 1957; Coleman, 1961). As families often bask in the reflected status of the corporate husband, parents bask in the reflected status of having an athletic son or daughter.

Another reason parents may want their child to participate on the travel team is that they may see this participation as the first step toward an amateur sports career. For example, in the hockey sample 94% of the fathers hoped that their sons would play high school hockey and 86% college hockey. For soccer fathers, it was 99% for high school soccer and 95% for college soccer.

If one doesn't allow his son or daughter to meet his or her commitment to the team, some other parent will and their child will be dropped. Control by the coach is maintained much the same way a boss maintains control in a corporation, one can be fired or let go.

In interviews with parents, parents would often comment on how they planned family activities on weekends around the child's travel games. Several commented on how they took their sons to visit relatives out of state and how they had asked the coaches permission. No one expressed the idea that family trips even at Thanksgiving or Christmas took precedence over travel games.

Harragan in her discussion of corporate gamesmanship for women explains this analogy between the control of the labor force in business and team members in sports.

> First off, team membership is voluntary, as is employment, but must be requested or applied for. To secure a place on a choice team, the applicant has to offer a needed skill or the potential for usefulness. Once accepted, the rookie agrees to abide by the formal rules of the game and the team. A novice who does not measure up to expectations, or does not follow the coach's directions, can be dropped and replaced with a more amendable candidate. (1977:44-45)

The coach as boss, mentor and arbitrator of values has become a dominant figure in the eyes of his team and their parents. A child learns that loyalty and devotion to the team is important and he becomes proud to be associated with and known as a member of a particular team. Team membership becomes a part of his self-identity. Commitment and loyalty to a team is similar to loyalty to a company.

As a child knows that a coach's command is to be obeyed, so does a corporate person know that the order of a superior is to be obeyed. At an early age, these team players learn to accept an authoritarian structure and to learn that a team is not a democratic organization. Even parents, as was noted before, grant and accept the coach's authority since it is the coach who determines who plays, how long one plays and what position.

As Al Rosen has stated about organized youth sports, "Organized sports are not democratic nor should they be. They teach respect for authority, discipline, and the individual's role in a group activity." (1967:26)

The emphasis on teamwork, obedience, and dispensability in sports are some of the same values that Scott and Hart speak of when they discuss the changes in American values from that of the Protestant Ethic to that of the "organizational ethic or imperative." The change in values has been "from

innate human nature to malleability, from individualism to obedience; from indispensability to dispensability; from community to specialization; from spontaneity to planning; from voluntarism to paternalism." (1979:53)

These changing values are evident in business as well as team sports. The concept that athletes are made not born is widely accepted today. The malleability of the individual or athlete is what training is all about. Good training, good coaches, hard work and dedication make a winning player and winning team.

At earlier and earlier ages youth in sports are asked to specialize not only in a particular sport but in a particular position. Already at the Mite level, eight years and under, in ice hockey, travel team players are designated as defensemen or forwards. These positions become more and more fixed as the youth move up through the league.

Soccer players too at fairly early ages become designated as defensemen or attackers. Boys and girls at fairly early ages (7 or 8) refer to themselves as goalies, fullbacks, halfbacks, centers and so forth. A child often feels that if he changes positions, he won't make the team the following year because he hasn't had as much practice in that position as someone else.

Children at early ages may have difficulty in trying to seriously play more than one sport. This is because the seasons for the various sports overlap creating conflicts with other sports.

Specialization by boys is evident in both the hockey and soccer samples. In the hockey sample, the mean age that boys started playing in an organized program was age 6½. These boys by Pee Wee level, ages 11-12, had been playing an average of 4½ to 5½ years. They were already veterans on the ice. In order to further perfect their skills, 70% of the fathers planned on sending their sons to summer hockey camp.

For soccer, the findings were similar except that soccer has both a Fall and Spring season in the Connecticut and New York area. So soccer youth have more months of organized play than do hockey players. Still 45% of fathers of soccer players planned on sending their sons to summer soccer camp. The mean age that boys began playing organized soccer was 7 years.

"Sport is ideologically bolstered by the performance principle, a principle which suggests that athletes are recruited and maintained on the basis of their merits." (Ingham, 1975:363)

American businesses or corporations also operate on the "performance principle." Both the businessman and the athlete must play by the rules to win whether it be winning a game or an economic profit. However, the ideal and the reality are not always synonomous. The ideology is to play by the rules.

However, as Brower states when discussing the professionalization of organized youth sports, the reality of the situation is:

> using all "reasonable" tactics to win. Getting away with undetected rule infractions and taking advantage of an umpire's mistake has become institutionalized as "part of the game." (1979:44-45)

Business tactics also include being shrewd and taking advantage of a competitive situation. The rules can be bent if one makes a profit. The belief being that if you don't take advantage of the situation, the competition will.

Competition in business and in youth sports sometimes gives rise to politics. Ideally, the selection process for making the team is based purely on performance. For the majority of youth this is probably the case, however, favoritism sometimes exists whether it be the coach's child or that of a large contributor. Favoritism also exists at times in business with "the

bosses son." The expression "It's not what you know, but who you know" although not the case most of the time, has some basis in reality.

When fathers were asked if the selection process for travel teams was based on skills, politics and skills, or politics, 39% of the soccer fathers and 51% of the hockey fathers said politics and skills.

One hockey father made this rather pessimistic comment about what he thought youth learned from competitive hockey.

> We think that instead of providing a focus for development and happiness during the important years between eight and twelve, youth hockey quickly became a harbinger of events that probably would occur in adult life. (Politics, the best man doesn't always get the job, etc.)

The majority of fathers, however, felt that politics played a very small if any part in the selection process. 59% of soccer and 49% of hockey fathers felt that the selection process was based on skills only.

On the whole, fathers held positive attitudes toward competitive youth sports. The majority of both hockey and soccer fathers believed that their son's playing competitive sports would be an advantage to their child in later years in a business career. 93% of hockey fathers and 88% of soccer fathers believed that a boy has an advantage in business if he has played competitive sports. When fathers were asked why they thought sports were important, the majority emphasized teamwork, competitiveness and tenacity.

Some of the comments made on why sports were important for training a youth for business were:

> A marketing manager, "Life is competitive. Groups are teams organized to achieve goals."
>
> A banker, "Business by its nature is competitive and involves interaction with other people."
>
> A vice-president of a corporation, "Competition is a fact of life, at least in the U.S., where to win is foremost."

> A tool and die maker, "Sports develop competitiveness and self-confidence."
>
> A cabinet maker, "He can learn how to handle disappointment and success, gain a realistic approach to life."

Fathers' beliefs that sports foster values and skills that are important in the business world are supported by testimonials of famous Americans and even sociologists. The following examples are found in Tutko and Bruns' book, Winning is Everything.

> General Douglas MacArthur: '(Sport) is a vital character builder. It molds the youth of our country for their roles as custodians of the republic... Fathers and mothers who would make their sons into men should have them participate in (sports).' (1976:41)
>
> Sociologist David Riesman: "The road to the board room leads through the locker room." (1976:41)
>
> Gerald Ford: "Broadly speaking, outside of a national character and an educated society, there are few things more important to a country's growth and well-being than competitive athletics." (1976:42)

One father of a soccer player stated as another reason why sports are important is that "recruiters like athletes." Whether or not recruiters favor athletes is a moot question, but the idea that athletics are important is one universally held.

Indicative of this belief that sports aid one in getting a job are the responses of soccer fathers to the following questions. One, "In applying for jobs do you think that a person has an advantage if he can say he has played varsity high school or college team sports?" 74% of fathers stated, "yes," to this question. Two, "Hypothetically, if you had two equally qualified applicants for a job would the fact that one played varsity high school or college sports make a difference in your opinion as to which one to hire?" 57% stated that they would be more likely to hire the one who played varsity sports. 42% said that it would make no difference. Only one person said

that he would be more likely to hire the non-athlete.

Harragan describes why fathers may hold these beliefs. She believes that men see team sports as training grounds for business. She states:

> (Corporate Men) have gone through preliminary training on the school teams and Pee Wee leagues years before; they sense what is expected of them; they are bonded in a familiar male camaraderie. They feel they have finally grown up "to be a man" and made it into the major leagues-the wage-earners' team. (1977:45)

Whether or not athletes become managers because recruiters are more likely to hire them or because their personalities and skills are types that are valued in business, there is some evidence that athletes often become managers. Maccoby, when he studied managers in technical corporations, found the typical manager to have been a high school athlete. "Most (75 percent) played on high school teams and 64 percent played in college." (1977:29).

All the evidence seems to point to the fact that children's competitive team sports are socializing agents for corporate America. From testimonials to corporate studies, athletes are shown to have advantages in business careers.

The research in this study of children's soccer and ice hockey associations supports the view that the attitudes, values and skills inculcated in the training of team athletes more and more mirrors the corporate structure, its values and ethic. From observations and interviews, it appears that parents and coaches accept and want their children to be socialized in these values. These values are now seen as basic to American society.

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